

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-14, 17-20, 23-27, 29-31, and 33-36 are pending. Of these, claims 17-20, 23-26, 29, 30, 33, and 34 are indicated as allowed. By this Amendment, claims 4, 15, 16, 21, 22, 28, 32, 37 and 38 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter contained therein, and claims 1, 5, 6, 8, and 11 are amended. No new matter is added.

Applicants acknowledge the indication that claims 4-6 and 11-13 recite allowable subject matter.

Claim 1 is amended to include the allowable features of claim 4, and claim 8 is amended to include the allowable features of claim 11 that correspond to the allowable features of claim 4. Claims 1 and 8 are also made more compact. Claim 4 is canceled accordingly. Claims 5 and 6 are amended to revise their dependencies. Claim 11 is amended to delete the features added to claim 8.

It is respectfully submitted that entry of the amendments is proper as 1) the amendments are made to cancel claims, 2) the amendments present the claims in better form for appeal, and 3) there is good and sufficient reason why the amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented. As to the third point, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments would place the application in condition for allowance, and were not presented earlier to fully argue the patentability of the claims. The amendments do not raise new issues requiring more than nominal consideration by the Examiner.

For the following reasons, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

Claims 1-3, 7, 8-10, 14-16, 21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, and 35-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 11-328690 to Doi. The rejection as to canceled claims 4, 15, 16, 21, 22, 28, 32, 37, and 38 is moot. As to the claims that remain, the rejection is traversed.

As to claims 1 and 8, claim 1 is amended to include the allowable features of claim 4, and claim 8 is amended to include the allowable features of claim 11 that correspond to the allowable features of claim 4. Accordingly, claims 1 and 8 are patentable over the applied reference to Doi. Claims 2, 3, 7, 27, and 35, which depend from claim 1, and claims 9, 10, 14, 31, and 36, which depend from claim 8, are likewise patentable over the applied reference to Doi for at least the reasons discussed above, and for the additional features they recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER:

Claims 4-6 and 11-13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 17-20, 23-26, 29, 30, 33, and 34 are allowed.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 503333.

Respectfully submitted,

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